

My name is Beth Chudnow. As both a parent of a child with profound disabilities and as a board member of Oak Hill I ask that you provide an increase in funding for community nonprofits during this biennium of 9% in fiscal year 2024 and 7% in fiscal year in 2025.

As all parents do, we anticipated the exciting milestones that our first child would reach month by month and year to year. Our anticipated dream was shattered within the first six months of our son's life as we navigated the overwhelming system of doctors, specialists, tests, confusion and heartbreak. Our son is severely and profoundly handicapped. He requires twenty-four hour direct care.

We found Oak Hill over thirty years ago and were embraced with support both physically and emotionally. We are a family of five living happy and fulfilled lives because of that support. We were able to fully engage in raising our two additional children. We were able to pursue our careers. Our two other children both have doctorates, one a professor of Japanese language and literature and the other a fisheries biologist. Funding Oak Hill equals support of the individual with disabilities. Funding Oak Hill equals support of the family with a member with disabilities.

As my husband and I grow older, we live in fear of this critical lifeline falling apart as money to fund community nonprofits is not adequate to provide competitive wages for the direct care, nursing and administrative staff. Funding needed required for the additional programs that support the community residents provided by Oak Hill.

Connecticut is a great state. Home to rich history, beauty, businesses, top ranked universities and colleges, excellent school districts and a creative community of people. Let us commit to be the state that funds the finest quality nonprofits in our country.

Society is judged by how it cares for those who are the most disadvantaged.